

# Rosemont Copper Project

## 1/24/2017 Update

### Overview

The proposed Rosemont Mine is a new, open pit copper and molybdenum mine in Pima County, Arizona, southeast of Tucson. The site is predominantly on Coronado National Forest lands (approx. 4800 acres). The US Forest Service (USFS) is the federal lead and responsible for development of the EIS evaluating the Mine Plan of Operations. The Corps of Engineers (Corps) is a cooperating agency and is responsible for evaluating the CWA 404 Individual Permit application for discharges associated with the proposed mine. The Corps is planning to adopt the EIS. The applicant is HudBay Minerals, Inc. a Canadian mining company and estimates the mineral deposit could produce up to 10% of U.S. annual production of copper over the 25-year life of the mine.

### Major EPA Issues

Wetlands, water quality and quantity, ground water drawdown, degradation of federally protected habitat, air quality, tribal and cultural resources, and human health.

If implemented as proposed, the project would result in direct surface impacts to over 40 acres (18 linear miles) of headwater streams, and secondary surface impacts to at least 28 acres. Additional surface water impacts from groundwater drawdown associated with the project would also occur, potentially affecting hundreds of acres of riparian habitat and wetlands. Project area aquatic resources include streams designated by the State as “Outstanding Arizona Waters” and habitat supporting eleven federally listed endangered or threatened species. Based on these potential impacts, EPA rated the Draft EIS for the project Environmentally Unsatisfactory - Inadequate (EU-3) in 2012. In addition, EPA issued CWA 404(q), 3(a) and 3(b) letters stating that proposed project will have substantial and unacceptable impacts to aquatic resources of national importance and is a candidate for elevation under EPA’s MOU with the Corps.

The deadline for formal referral to Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has been temporarily postponed, awaiting the Corps final decision on the section 404 permit. In July 2016, the Corps Los Angeles District recommended to the South Pacific Division that a CWA 404 permit not be issued for the proposed Rosemont Mine (final decision pending – late Feb/March 2017).

### Status of potential NEPA Actions

The USFS has issued their Final EIS and will notify EPA 30 days before issuing their ROD, which is being coordinated with the Corps 404 permit decision. If the 404 permit is granted EPA may recommend formal referral to CEQ on the grounds that the project would violate the Clean Water Act or EPA may issue a veto of the 404 permit.

